

Newsletter April 2019

CASTRATING CALVES

Why castrate your bull calves? As well as potentially adding value to the carcass of a slaughtered animal, you are saving yourself the potential cost of unwanted early pregnancies in your heifers, leading to emergency caesareans and many other issues. Steers are also much easier and safer to handle than entire bulls.

What techniques can be used?

(1) Rubber ring

This cuts off the blood supply to the testes and scrotum, which dry up and drop off. It is illegal to use this method on calves that are over one week old, and doing so greatly increases the risk of infection. Worst case scenario is the calf can die from tetanus infection.

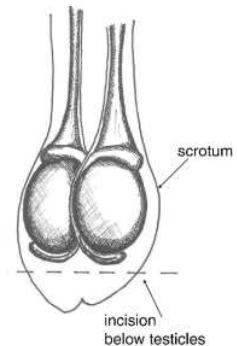


(2) Bloodless castration/burdizzo

Crushes the spermatid cord and surrounding vessels to cut off the blood supply to the testicle without breaking the skin. We do **NOT** recommend this method as if done incorrectly you will have a fertile bull calf (called a "rig").

(3) Surgical Castration

Where the scrotum is cut and the testicles are manually removed. **We strongly recommend you have your calves castrated at 2 - 3 months of age.** There are many benefits to this, such as reduced amount (and therefore cost) of drugs used and time taken, ease of handling, reduced risk of infection, reduced risk of bleeding post castrate, and reduced risk of injury to the vet! After the procedure please ensure your calves are returning to clean, freshly bedded area to reduce risk of infection and check them regularly.



Lamb Diseases Meeting

The next meeting of the FVSW 'Flock Health and Production Club' will take place at **Little Clayhill Farm, Charlynch Lane, Bridgwater, TA5 2PH at 3pm on Wednesday, 10th April.** The topic to be covered will be '**Lamb Diseases: Diagnosis, Management and Prevention**' which will include a practical on clinically examining lambs to aid treatment decisions, as well as talks from FVSW and MSD. The meeting is free to Flock Health club members or £30 to non-flock health club members. **Please ring any of the offices to confirm your attendance.**



Easter Opening Hours

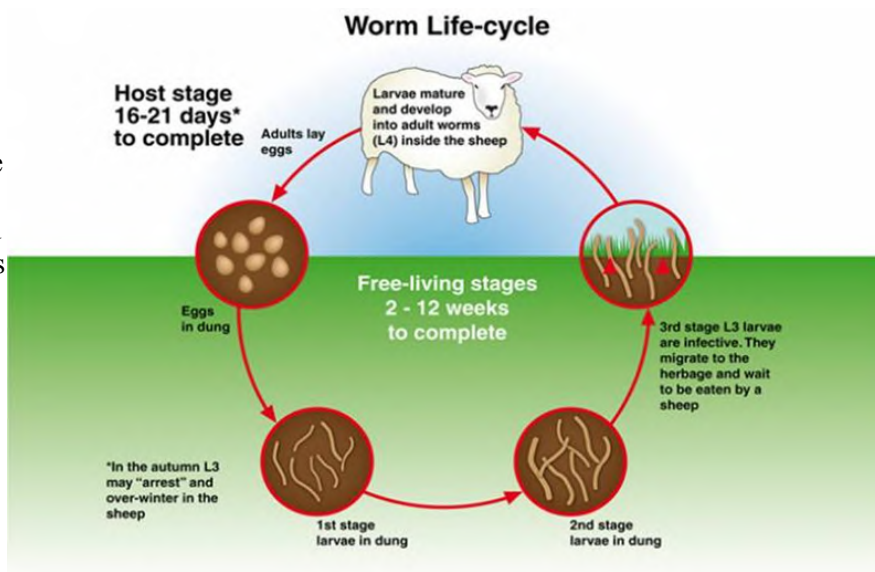


Our offices will be shut on Good Friday, April 19th & Easter Monday, April 22nd. Drugs can be collected from our Sedgemoor Office by appointment only (*there will be a charge if the vet has to come to the office*)

Nematodirus WARNING

Due to the record temperatures reached in February, the SCOPS Nematodirus forecast is currently predicting moderate risk in many parts of the UK. In such areas, peak risk could occur within the next 2 weeks if conditions remain favourable.

Current predictions for lower ground in Somerset indicates a moderate risk of Nematodirus hatching with the mass hatch likely in the next 2 weeks should favourable conditions continue.



Lambs that are at risk are those that are likely to be consuming significant quantities of grass (6-12 wo), however this may be younger where ewes are not milking particularly well. Any ground that carried lambs last spring is considered high risk pasture. Nematodirus larvae cause damage to the lamb's intestines and therefore faecal egg counts are not a good indicator of infection. Profuse diarrhoea causing impaired growth rates, weight loss and death can be sudden in onset.

White drench wormers should be used in the face of mass hatch in high risk lambs.

Genomics

How do you select your dairy replacements? Would you like to make better, more informed decisions? Unlock the potential of your replacements by using genomic testing to help improve breeding practices.

Genomics is the use of a DNA sample from an ear notch of your heifers to understand her future strengths and weaknesses. Genomic testing can help predict future profitability potential of a heifer or a herd. This in turn allows producers to optimise the profitability and yields of their herds by making different animal selection and strategic breeding decisions.

We now offer a Genomics service. Vet Tom Crosby will be co-ordinating this new service. Let him or the practice know if you want to find out more about Genomics or would be interested in attending a farmer meeting on this exciting topic.



Your local farm veterinary service

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